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MAYA'S MAKE: PARTY PIÑATA

Print Instructions

A piñata is a container or figure, made out of paper which can be filled with goodies. It's a big success at parties in Mexico and in other Latin American countries, where children take turns at pulling off the ribbons which dangle down from the piñata. The ribbons hide a secret trapdoor... if you pull the right ribbon the trapdoor opens, sending the goodies tumbling down for everyone to grab!
Make a piñata for your own party, or you could get together with your friends to make one for someone else's party. If you decorate it and make it really personal to the birthday boy/girl, they can keep it for a long time after the party has finished.

You will need:

- A round balloon
- Old newspapers
- Coloured tissue or thin paper
- Glue for sticking paper
- Scissors - ask an adult for help with these
- Narrow width ribbons and string
- Narrow clear sticky tape
- Wide clear sticky tape
- Photos of your friend (optional)
- Sparkles, feathers, ribbons (optional)
- Goodies to fill the Piñata!

Step one - Blow up the balloon and tie a knot at the end. Tear off strips of newspaper about 5cm wide and about 15cm long. Put glue on the newspaper strips and spread them evenly over the balloon, completely covering it. Let the first layer dry and then put on a couple more layers, letting each one dry first.

Step two - Once all the final newspaper layer is dry, lay the balloon on its side. Ask a grownup to cut a hole about 10cm across at one end of the balloon. IMPORTANT, you must save the piece you cut out as this will be your trapdoor. Then you can pop the balloon and pull it out of your newspaper shape.

At the other end of the newspaper shape, cut two small holes. Cut two pieces of string or ribbon which are each about 45cm long. Tie a knot at the end of both pieces of string or ribbon and bring them up through the holes so that the knot is on the inside. Tie the other two ends of the strings/ribbons together with a knot to make the handle. This is how the grown up holds the piñata when everyone is pulling on the ribbons below.

Step three - Start decorating your piñata. First use different colour tissue paper or coloured paper, to make sure that all the newspaper is hidden. If you have photos of your friend you could cover the piñata with those, and you could also cover it with things that your friend likes. Maybe he or she loves cats or football? You could cut out pictures of cats or footballs from magazines and stick those on too - remember this is all about your friend. Maybe a few extras, such as sparkles, feathers or ribbons would add to the effect?

Step four - You also need to decorate the 10cm trapdoor that you cut out earlier. Decorate this in the same style, keeping in mind that you are going to be sticking this onto the piñata later (step six). Then add the ribbons; and remember, only one of the ribbons should open the trapdoor, all of the other ribbons should only be lightly attached so that when they are pulled, they just come off the piñata without pulling open the trapdoor. It depends on the size of your piñata, but you'll probably need about 20 narrow width ribbons and they can be stuck on with the narrow sticky tape.

Step five - Now fill up your piñata with goodies, a grown up could give you some ideas. It doesn't have to be sweets or chocolate - you could put in small toys, balloons, pencils, rubbers - whatever you like. Just make sure the gifts aren't too heavy, otherwise the trapdoor will open under the weight!

Step six - Take trapdoor and carefully tape it back on the piñata. (If it opens and doesn't sit snugly in the piñata, then you could use wide clear sticky tape to lightly tape the door shut.)

Now all you have to do is take the piñata to the party!